

and we have sent 500 more winterized tents to that province to help the people who have been made homeless by the earthquake there. We are also working hard to help the reconstruction process and help Turkey's businesses get back in business. We want everyone to be able to go back to work as soon as possible.

The one thing I would like to say today—I know I speak for my wife and my daughter—is that we were very, very moved by having family contact with other families. And we could imagine what our lives would be like if such a thing were to happen to us, as we have seen it happen to families in the United States.

We were so impressed that a total of 87 other countries came forward to help the people of Turkey who were hurt in the earthquake. And we were very grateful that one of the countries that came forward to help was your neighbor Greece. And then, when the Greeks had their earthquake, the Turkish people came forward to help them.

I hope the ordinary people in Greece and Turkey who have suffered from these terrible natural disasters can send a clear message to the leaders that the people of this region can get along, and they should get along, and when they do get along, our children's lives and futures are better.

Now, in the meanwhile, I want you to know that we in the United States will do everything we can to help you until your lives return to normal. And we will help those people in the area hit by the most recent earthquake. We will stay with you and work with you. And I just want to urge you to keep your spirits up, keep the smiles on your children's faces, keep helping the people who lost their loved ones in the earthquake, and know that together we will get through this to better days.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. at the Dogukisla tent city. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kemal Onal of Izmit Province; and Mayor Sefa Sirmen of Izmit.

Remarks to American and Turkish Business Leaders in Istanbul, Turkey *November 16, 1999*

The President. Thank you very much. First, to my good friend President Demirel, thank you for your remarks and for the wonderful visit that you have hosted for Hillary and Chelsea and me and our entire American party, culminating in the magnificent dinner last night and the presentation of the award, which I will treasure always. Thank you, Mr. Koc, for gathering this distinguished group of Turkish business leaders. To the American delegation here, Secretary Albright and others, thank you very much for being here.

And I want to say a special word of appreciation to Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker for her willingness to lead this group. The presence of Nancy and her husband, Senator Howard Baker, here—literally, two of the most outstanding Members of the United States Senate since the Second World War—is a great tribute to the importance of the relationships between the United States and Turkey. I am grateful for their service to our country and grateful for their leadership. And Nancy, thank you very much for your giving your time to this important endeavor. I thank you very much.

I am honored to be in this historic city of two continents and three empires, now the modern hub of Turkey's free market democracy. I am thrilled to be in this magnificent building, in this beautiful room. It's almost enough to make you miss the empire. [Laughter] Unfortunately, at least if we still had the empire, I'm sure I wouldn't be invited to lunch here today, so—[laughter]—I think we're getting the best of both worlds.

I'm honored to be with all of you who have contributed so much to the growth and strength of this country. I thank the Turkish-U.S. Business Council and the American-Turkish Council for all they have done to promote ties between our two nations and to improve the welfare of our peoples.

President Demirel has said that Turkey is situated at the center of the world. That was true in ancient times; it was true in the 20th century, even after the end of the Ottoman

Empire. It will be even more true in the 21st century. What Turkey does, and what we do together in the coming years, will help to determine whether stability takes roots in the Balkans and the Aegean; whether true and lasting peace comes to the people of the Middle East; whether democratic transformations in the States of the former Soviet empire, from the Caucasus to central Asia, actually succeeds.

Clearly, economic developments will have a lot to do with our success in all these endeavors. The steps we take together today to improve the climate for trade, investment, and jobs will help to bring this region together, to reduce tensions, to strengthen democratic governments. In turn, the strengthening of freedom and stability will do even more to spur prosperity.

There is hardly a place in the world where the intersection of politics and economics is more clearly complete. Therefore, I would like to take just a couple of moments to make a few points about what we have been doing and where we are headed together. First, let me applaud the bold economic reforms taken by Turkey under Prime Minister Ecevit, including landmark legislation on Social Security, international arbitration, banking regulation, and the budget. These are part of a global trend of opening markets, strengthening financial stability, and imposing fiscal discipline, while working to ensure that society's most vulnerable are not left behind. These measures will improve the climate for trade and investment and will lead to more jobs and higher incomes for the people of Turkey.

Second, I am very pleased, to echo President Demirel, that trade between our two countries has reached new heights, rising 50 percent in the last 5 years alone, now surpassing \$6 billion. We are the fourth largest supplier of exports to Turkey and the second largest market for exports from Turkey.

Following the August earthquake and the pressures it put on the economy here, we have gone the extra mile to be flexible to Turkish textile exports, and recently taken important steps to further expand trade and investment between our two countries. In September, during Prime Minister Ecevit's visit, we signed a trade and investment

framework agreement to cut through redtape and work through disagreements in our trading relationship. Our Overseas Private Investment Corporation will soon double its activity in Turkey to more than \$1 billion. Our Export-Import Bank will delegate \$1 billion in lending authority to 12 Turkish banks—powerful evidence of our confidence in Turkey's economy and our commitment to strengthen it. In turn, Turkey's decision to open its market to cattle imports will benefit United States ranchers and Turkish consumers. We're also on the verge of completing some major agreements—a \$30 million contract for a vessel-tracking system to help keep the crowded Bosphorus safe and protect the environment; a framework agreement for joint irrigation projects in southeastern Turkey; and a half-dozen power plants worth some \$5 billion. These projects will be good for both countries, and I hope we can conclude all of them soon.

Third, we are moving ahead, as the President said, to build energy security in the new century. We've made great strides toward the proposed Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the trans-Caspian gas pipeline. These will help to diversify our sources of energy and help the newly independent countries of the Caucasus and central Asia stand on their own feet. They will put Turkey, our trusted ally, front and center in the effort to create a secure energy future.

I'll bet if you polled the citizens of the United States and Turkey, over 90 percent of them would never have heard of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline or the trans-Caspian gas pipeline. But if we do this right, 20 years from now, 90 percent of them will look back and say thank you for making a good decision at a critical time.

Fourth, greater economic cooperation and integration is vital to the future of Turkey and its southeastern European neighbors. A central challenge, of course, is building stronger economic ties between Turkey and Greece as a part of a larger effort for reconciliation and cooperation between your two countries. I am very pleased the private sector is leading the way. But the Turkish-Greek Business Council is back in business, and both nations are talking about increasing bilateral trade and tourism.

Political and economic forces here, again, reinforce each other. In order for our two NATO Allies, Greece and Turkey, to be full partners in the European Union, bilateral relationships must improve. In order for southeastern Europe to overcome the Balkan wars in Bosnia and Kosovo and the legacy of communism in the other states of the southeast, the nations of the region must draw closer to each other, and then together draw closer to the new Europe.

Again, I say these efforts can only succeed if Greece and Turkey are leading the effort. Because of the earthquakes and the human response to them by both Turks and Greeks; because of the leadership, outstanding leadership in the Turkish and Greek Governments; because of the Cyprus talks just announced, we now have a genuine opportunity for fundamental and enduring reconciliations between your two lands. I will do everything I can to help you seize this chance. I believe seizing this chance will have enormous economic, as well as political, benefit to the ordinary citizens of Turkey well into the next century.

The last point I want to make is this: If we want strong economic growth and lasting prosperity, it is essential that we work everywhere to deepen freedom and democracy in our own countries and around the world. I applaud the strides Turkey is making in this regard, not because the Americans or the Europeans want it, but because it's the right thing for the Turkish people. And I encourage further progress in these areas, such as freedom of expression, because it is right, and because we in America have a great stake in your stability, in Turkey's ability to reap the full benefits of the information age and the global economy, in Turkey's full integration in Europe, in Turkey's full success as a modern, prosperous, secular society bridging East and West.

I am proud that we are working as partners with you to build better lives for our citizens, and I am proud to have had the opportunity to represent the people of the United States on this historic trip.

I would like to close by asking my fellow Americans to join me in a toast to President Demirel, the leaders of this organization, and the people of our host nation, Turkey.

[At this point, the participants drank a toast.]

The President. This is a beautiful painting. Wait, I want to say this. You know, I just bought a new home. [Laughter] In my attempt to fulfill the last ambition of my life, I am trying to follow in the steps of Senator Howard Baker and become the husband of a United States Senator. And this will look very good in that home. Thank you very much.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:25 p.m. in the Palace Dining Hall at the Imperial Chalet. In his remarks, he referred to President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey; Mustafa V. Koc, chairman, Turkish-U.S. Business Council of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK); former Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker, chairman, American-Turkish Council, and her husband, former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr.; and Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Demirel.

Statement on Environmental Review of Trade Agreements

November 16, 1999

Today Vice President Gore and I are taking two important steps to ensure that our efforts to expand trade reflect our strong commitment to promoting environmental protection worldwide. America has proved time and again that a strong economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. The new steps I am announcing today will help ensure that we and other nations do our utmost to protect our environment as we work together to build a growing, prosperous global economy.

First, I have signed Executive order requiring careful assessment and written review of the potential environmental impacts of major trade agreements. These reviews, with full opportunity for public input, will better enable us to fully integrate environmental considerations into the development of U.S. positions in trade negotiations.

Second, I am issuing a declaration of principles on trade and environment to guide our negotiators in the new round of World Trade